

SAINT FRANCIS COMMUNITY SERVICES HILITES

FALL 2017

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BUILDING STRONG FATHERS

Pg. 12





OUR MISSION

Saint Francis, providing healing
and hope to children and families.

Saint Francis Community Services publishes the Hi-Lites newsletter four times a year.
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A MESSAGE FROM FR. BOBBY



The Very Reverend,
Robert Nelson Smith

.....
Dean, President, and CEO

This past summer, I had the privilege of preaching at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa - from the same pulpit once occupied by Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and by Bishop Robert Mize Jr. (Fr. Bob), the founder of Saint Francis Community Services. It's difficult to fully express how meaningful that experience was for me, along with the almost mystical sense of connection I felt with those two extraordinary human beings. In my reflection on the trip, which you'll find in this issue, I say, "At Saint Francis we believe in doing what others believe impossible; we believe in leaps of faith." I see evidence of that belief in the lives of Archbishop Tutu and Fr. Bob. I also see it every

day in the people I meet through Saint Francis. Hopefully, you'll see it, too, in the people we'll introduce to you in these pages.

Sam Klaus was a drug addict at risk of losing his children to state custody if he didn't make some serious changes. With the help of Saint Francis' Fatherhood Initiative, he's done what many thought impossible. Now clean of drugs, employed, and enrolled in vocational school, Sam has turned his life around and begun rebuilding his relationship with his kids.

Alexandria Ware also believes in the impossible. She spent years in foster care until she aged out at 18. Alex's drive to help herself and others led her to college where she's now pursuing a Master's degree. Over the summer, she served as a congressional intern on Capitol Hill - one of 12 youth selected nationwide to participate in the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's Foster Youth Internship Program.

In this issue, you'll also meet Joan Schwan, our new executive director for Nebraska. Joan has a long history of helping children and families in Nebraska as both a foster parent and as a clinical therapist. She has set her sights on filling gaps in therapeutic and clinical services in many of the state's underserved areas. You'll also meet the Brocks, one of the families Joan and her staff serves. Introduced to foster care through people at their church, Adam and BryAnna have since

adopted a brother and sister. And they're still fostering.

We'll also share news about recent visits to Saint Francis by two very special people - Thandi Tutu Gxashe, daughter of Archbishop Tutu and CEO of TutuDesk, a nonprofit organization that provides portable desks to African school children, and Jack DuVall, renowned expert in civil resistance and social movements who helped found the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict.

Perhaps by now you've noticed what all these people have in common. By offering hope and healing, they achieve what others thought impossible. They believe in leaps of faith. So do the social workers, therapists, and support staff here at Saint Francis. We believe, because that's how we transform lives.

May God bless you and keep you,

SCHWAN HOPES TO FILL THE GAPS IN NEBRASKA

SAINT FRANCIS IN NEBRASKA



- 78 children in foster care
- 56 licensed foster homes

THREE OFFICES:

GRAND ISLAND

- Executive Director
- Program Coordinator
- Four Resource Workers
- One Intern

NORTH PLATTE

- Therapist
- One Family Support Worker
- Three Resource Workers

GERING

- One Resource Worker

Schwan says, "My hope for Nebraska children is to first make sure Saint Francis is supporting families and doing foster care well."



Schwan, right, and Program Coordinator Michelle Dramse in Saint Francis' Grand Island office.

Joan Schwan joined Saint Francis last January because she saw opportunities for growth – for Saint Francis, for herself, and for the children and families of Nebraska. With 25 years of child welfare experience to back her up, Schwan left private practice as a clinical therapist and became Saint Francis' executive director for Nebraska.

"Children have always been my life's passion," she said. "I've always worked with kids, initially as a director of early childhood education programs at church and at school and later for the State of Nebraska's Foster Care Review Board, where I gained experience in advocacy and drafting legislation."

Schwan worked for the state for 15 years, supervising the Lincoln service area, west of the panhandle. After she earned her Master's degree in community counseling, she went into private practice for 12 years, treating children in foster care and children with trauma.

"As a therapist, I worked with some of the severest cases of reactive attachment disorder, in which trauma has interfered with a child's normal attachment process with the primary attachment figure, usually a parent. It occurs most often with babies that are medically fragile, children who have had multiple caregivers, or traumatized children who haven't received the care they need to feel safe."

The chance to help Saint Francis address gaps in service to Nebraska children and families led Schwan to accept the executive director position.

"In western Nebraska, Saint Francis is the only provider of agency-based foster care homes, so there's a great opportunity for us to serve in that area," she said. "There's also a huge gap in services west of North Platte for foster care, support, therapy, and intensive family preservation. I'm hoping Saint Francis can fill some of those gaps."

She and her staff haven't wasted any time. Saint Francis in Nebraska began providing intensive family preservation services in July, along with family support services in the North Platte area. Schwan and her staff are also providing supervised visitations and parent education. She's hired additional therapists, foster care workers, and support workers to meet the growing demand.

As a therapist, Schwan understands the needs of children in trauma. As a foster parent, she understands the needs of those who care for them. She began fostering newborns in 1989, shortly after she and her family moved to Grand Island. "We took care of 33 infants until they either went home or were adopted."

"Then we started taking in pregnant teens – birth moms," she said. "There's a severe shortage of resources for pregnant girls that need help. Those are the ones really close to my heart. The youngest one was 12 years old, and she had twins. The oldest one was 29 and developmentally disabled. Her pregnancy was the result of sexual assault."

Continued to page 5

SHARING HUMAN TRAFFICKING EXPERTISE

Continued from page 4

Now, she takes in wards of the state, and in May, she assumed guardianship of a 16-year-old foster daughter. She estimates that she's fostered about 100 youth since 1989.

"Being a foster parent is extremely helpful because I can say to foster parents, 'I've walked your walk.' You put your heart on the line every single day for children, not knowing how long they might stay. They could go home tomorrow. It's helped me relate to foster parents and offer them strategies. Of course, I've learned a lot from them, too."

Schwan says her hope for Nebraska children is to first make sure Saint Francis is supporting families and doing foster care well. Then she wants to fill the gaps by expanding therapeutic and clinical services. She sees opportunities for Saint Francis to minister to many more people in Nebraska.

"I was very fulfilled in private practice," she said. "But I saw a chance to help more children than just those that walked through my door in Grand Island. I could help children across the state. I was attracted to Saint Francis' mission. It's truly just about serving children and families with a servant's heart. That appeals to me."



Melanie Miller Garrett leads a workshop at the Thistle Farms National Conference

Saint Francis' Melanie Miller Garrett recently provided her insight and expertise to more than 120 participants at the Thistle Farms National Conference at Vanderbilt University. Leading a workshop titled "Your Role in Serving Young Survivors", the Clover House director shared with attendees how Saint Francis is responding to human trafficking through prevention, identification, and restoration.

More than 300 persons from 35 states gathered for the summer conference to learn how to best serve survivors and support women and girls on their healing journeys. As a leader in the field, Saint Francis provided attendees with new knowledge, strategies, and tools to inform their work in survivor-centered communities. Clover House, Saint Francis' restorative residential program, serves

young survivors ages 12 years and older. As one of 40 Thistle Farms sister organizations nationwide serving trafficking survivors, Saint Francis is the only one specifically serving youth.

"Our Clover House model addresses a service gap for human trafficking survivors in this country, and we're the only such program in Kansas," said Angela Smith, corporate director of mission engagement. "We're also unique in that our approach includes community collaboration alongside a continuum that addresses trafficking from identification to clinical services to restorative care to advocacy and beyond."

"As an organization founded by an Episcopal priest, we're proud to be associated with Thistle Farms, which was also founded by an Episcopal priest, Becca Stevens. Our shared history, mission, and vision are the driving force behind the connection, and our hope is that this relationship continues to strengthen our work of hope and healing both nationally and internationally."



To learn about Clover House and help support healing for human trafficking survivors, visit TheSaintFrancisFoundation.org.



Clover House
Saint Francis
Community Services®

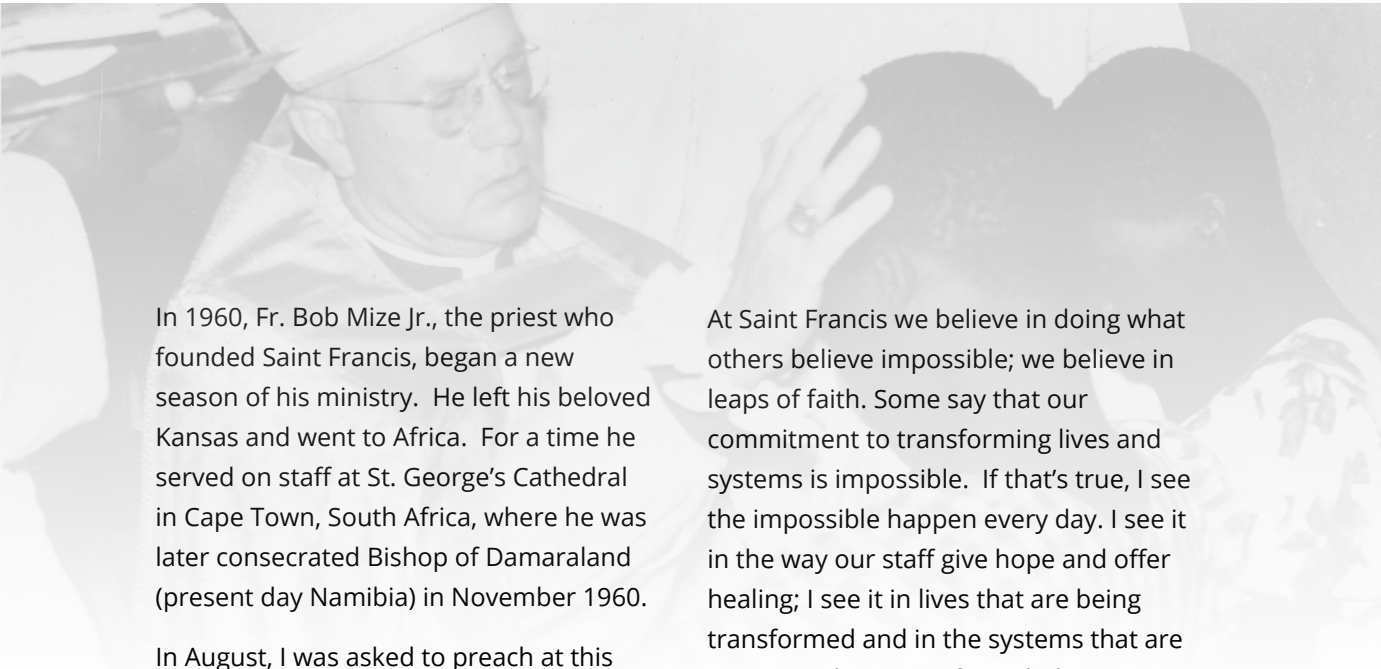


TIES TO SOUTH AFRICA A REFLECTION: FROM FR. BOBBY

Fr. Bob Mize Jr., founder of Saint Francis, at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa, where he was consecrated Bishop of Damaraland.



Fr. Bobby delivers his sermon at St. George's Cathedral.



In 1960, Fr. Bob Mize Jr., the priest who founded Saint Francis, began a new season of his ministry. He left his beloved Kansas and went to Africa. For a time he served on staff at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, South Africa, where he was later consecrated Bishop of Damaraland (present day Namibia) in November 1960.

In August, I was asked to preach at this historic church — from the same pulpit once occupied by Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and by the founder of Saint Francis.

It was at St. George's that Fr. Bob's passion for justice grew from loving service to children in Kansas to being an early, passionate opponent of South Africa's system of apartheid. In March 1968, Fr. Bob preached his final sermon at St. George's. The day I preached there, I was told by someone who had been in attendance that it was standing room only on the day of Fr. Bob's last mass. The Cathedral was so full, children sat on window ledges. Following mass, police escorted him to the airport because the South African authorities were forcing him to leave the country.

The Gospel passage assigned for the day I preached was Matthew 14:22-23, the story of the disciples being caught alone in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus walks to them on the water and when Peter sees him he leaps from the boat, joining Christ on the water. It's only when Peter realizes he is doing the impossible that he starts to sink.

At Saint Francis we believe in doing what others believe impossible; we believe in leaps of faith. Some say that our commitment to transforming lives and systems is impossible. If that's true, I see the impossible happen every day. I see it in the way our staff give hope and offer healing; I see it in lives that are being transformed and in the systems that are improving because of our dedication to excellence.

I believe we are called to join Peter in getting out of the boat to do the impossible. To fully comprehend God's love, we must be willing to share God's abundant possibility — including doing what others believe to be impossible.


Fr. Bob found it impossible to tolerate the culture of apartheid he witnessed, so much so that in 1968 the government forced him out of South West Africa because he refused to stop serving all, to stop loving all.

The spirit of Fr. Bob's ministry lies at the heart of why Saint Francis strives to achieve its mission of hope and healing for children and families. While in Kansas he worked tirelessly for justice in the lives of children; later that spirit guided his life and actions in Africa.

The same spirit continues to guide our work today.

.....

FOSTERING AND ADOPTION

..... 
Adam and
BryAnna Brock



COUPLE SAYS *Love* IS THE WHOLE POINT

.....
"CHILDREN NEED ATTACHMENT, THEY NEED TO BE LOVED"

Two years ago, Adam and BryAnna Brock returned home from work to find their neighbor waiting on their stoop. Veteran foster parents, their neighbors had just taken in a sibling

set of four, children from another neighborhood family. Three more siblings needed a place to stay. How about it? "Why not," thought the Brocks. "We have the room." Though

the children didn't stay with them long, the experience did.

"That was the first time we'd ever thought about foster care," said

BryAnna. "But we figured that if we could take in three kids, then why aren't we looking at this as an option for us? What other children might come into our lives?"

Transplants from the East Coast (Maine and Massachusetts), the couple attended school together at York College in York, Nebraska. After graduation, they stayed in the state, moving to Grand Island, where BryAnna taught first grade and Adam taught middle school. They'd been trying to have their own baby for at least a couple years when they began foster parenting class. So it seemed natural to start by caring for infants.

"Our first placement was a 6-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy," said BryAnna. "We'd wanted to foster babies, but once those two walked through our door, that didn't matter anymore. They were sweet kids who needed a home. They had bounced around a lot; I think we were their sixth home in two months. I remember the little boy having a temper tantrum, and I just held him and sang 'Jesus Loves Me' until he calmed down. We realized then that this is what we need to be doing."

After that first sibling set, a few respite placements followed. Then Daetric and Mashea arrived.

"Daetric was six, Mashea was four, and we were their fourth foster home," said BryAnna. "By then, we were ready to adopt any children who came into our care."

So they did. In April 2016, they adopted the brother and sister in Lincoln.

"It was a fun day," said Adam. "We dressed in our finest, and filled the courtroom with friends and family. The judge was so kind to them. We'd done bonding therapy with Joan

(Schwan, executive director of Saint Francis in Nebraska), and she helped us make sure the kids understood what was happening. Others had promised to adopt them before, so telling them they were going to be adopted didn't mean much. Leading up to that day, we worked to make sure they understood that yes, this is it. This is the day you get your forever family. There's no turning back."

Among those celebrating were members of Adam and BryAnna's church family.

"The church is our support network," said Adam. "It started with our neighbor down the street. Also, our preacher and his wife who had done foster care for years. Hearing their stories encouraged us as we prepared to foster and to adopt."

Within a year of getting their own license, their preacher passed away from cancer. That event, along with the adoptions, prompted the Brocks to make some changes.

"I'd already been working in ministry part-time while teaching," said Adam. "Once Daetric and Mashea entered the picture, I had children to attend to along with school and church. I couldn't do all three, so I chose to go into the ministry full-time. We decided, too, that BryAnna would stay home to care for Daetric and Mashea and our two other foster children. The load was too great otherwise."

Shortly after the adoption, the Brocks received a 9-month-old boy. His 3-week-old sister was two months premature and remained in the hospital another two weeks before joining her brother. That was about seven months ago. Now, they're all deeply attached to each other, but it's uncertain whether

the Brocks will be able to adopt the children. If and when they leave, there will be plenty of heartache to go around. Yet, BryAnna is philosophical about it.

"I talk to a lot of people who say, 'I could never foster, I'd get too attached,'" she said. "But that's the point. Children need to get attached. If I didn't bond with this sweet baby girl we took home at 4 weeks old, she wouldn't learn to love. Yes, it's hard to think she might live somewhere else, but we're adults. We can handle it. Children need attachment, they need to be loved."



FORMER FOSTER YOUTH TAKE POSITIVE ACTION IN D.C.



Alexandria Ware returned from a summer spent working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., a mere three weeks before beginning her Master's thesis at Oklahoma State University. One could reasonably assume that Alex is an accomplished person. And she is. The 24-year-old was one of 12 former foster youth selected from hundreds of applicants nationwide to participate in the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) Foster Youth Internship Program.

Formed in 2001, the CCAI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to raise awareness about children in need of safe, loving forever families. The Foster Youth Internship Program gives young adults who have spent time in foster care the opportunity to research policy issues affecting foster youth and to write reports and make recommendations to Congress and other policymakers.

Alex interned with the House Ways and Means Committee, answering phones, writing briefing notes and summaries, preparing for hearings, and conducting research.

"I wanted to learn how policy affects child welfare issues," she said. "I understand the research side, how growing up in foster care and having adverse experiences relates to child welfare. But I didn't understand the

policy side. I knew that to be the best professional I could be, I needed to put the two together."

That desire to translate a painful past into positive action is something Kellie Becker understands. She herself entered foster care at 13 and

"I motivated myself," she said. "I learned at a young age that if I wanted to see change, I needed to be change. I knew I had to stand up for myself."

aged out five years later. She went on to study social work, eventually earning a Master's degree from the University of Kansas. Now she's Saint Francis' Independent Living program manager for the Wichita Region. She was also a CCAI intern in 2014.

"What energized me most about the program was the opportunity to share my story so better policies could be developed for youth coming up behind me," she said. "It was a chance to improve the system. I feel that I went through what I did for a reason, and I wanted to connect my experiences with my social work education to help propose legislation that helps other foster youth."

Because of her own experience, Kellie was able to serve as a resource for advice and information as Alex applied to the program.

Alex's own story involved years spent in and out of foster care from the age of three until she "aged out" in 2011.

"My mom was basically unfit because she lacked the skills to take care of us," she said. "She had grown up in foster care herself, and she never had the resources and skills I received from my social worker and foster parents.

It wasn't that she didn't love us, she just didn't know how to be a parent. So, I look at foster care from a little different perspective than most people."

Early on, Alex knew that no one could advocate better for her than herself.

"I motivated myself," she said. "I learned at a young age that if I wanted to see change, I needed to be change. I knew I had to stand up for myself."

She wasn't afraid to be vocal about her wishes either. Sometimes it got her into trouble, and she spent several years moving from foster homes to group homes to juvenile detention and back again.



Alex Ware met with policymakers in both the House and Senate during her internship on Capitol Hill, including (clockwise from left), Congressman Kevin Brady (TX), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee; Kansas Congressman Roger Marshall; and Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana.

"I didn't feel understood," she said. "When I didn't understand why something was happening to me, I didn't know how to express my emotions. So, everything turned to anger and I acted out."

There was a positive side to that strong will. When she decided to age out rather than seek permanency through adoption or foster care, she sat down with her social worker and foster parents and told them she wanted to go to Independent Living where foster youth can get the support and skills they need to live on their own. When she was ready to drive, she told them she wanted to start driver's education.

"I always knew education was my path to success," she said. "So, I worked with my high school guidance counselor to apply for scholarships and grants focused

on African-American youth and foster youth. I also had the school rearrange my schedule so I could graduate a year early. That way I would have more time to use the college tuition waiver for foster youth and do the things I wanted to do."

Alex graduated from Kansas State University in 2016 with a degree in family studies. Then she moved to Oklahoma to begin work on a Master's in human development and family science. She already has her eyes on earning a doctorate. And, maybe a law degree. Mostly, she hopes to be an advocate for families that want to adopt children. She says she's seen the struggles families face when dealing with "the system." Her own experiences in foster care, along with her time on Capitol Hill, have widened her view of policy, government, law, and advocacy.

"My advice for foster youth aging out of care is to take advantage of the services offered," said Alex. "Also, the child welfare system needs to do a better job in informing kids about resources. Not all children are like I was; they can't advocate for themselves. Some kids don't even know their rights. They need mentors and knowledge to help them succeed."

"Being in foster care comes with such a stigma. When I tell someone I grew up in care, they usually say 'Oh, you poor child.' But I tell them, 'Don't feel sorry for me, because you don't know the full story. You don't know how it's impacted my life. It's made me who I am today.'"

HELPING MEN BECOME THE DADS THEIR KIDS NEED

That Wednesday in August 2016 was an eye-opener for Sam Klaus. Law enforcement arrived at his door, ready to search his house and test him for drugs. Fortunately, he passed his urinalysis. Otherwise, the police would have removed his four children from the home. By his own admission, everyone knew Sam was into drugs, especially the police. He had dealings with them before. That day, though, something was different. Sam looked around and realized he could lose everything he cared most about in the world. Two of his children were already in foster care. If he didn't make some changes, his other kids would join them. He realized he was drowning, and that he was taking his children with him.

"I was a drug addict," he said. "I barely talked to my kids; I rarely had anything to do with them. I was too much into my drugs. After that day, I spent some time taking a long, hard look at things. I didn't want my kids visiting me in prison, if they got to see me at all. I wanted to be part of their lives."

So, he told his Saint Francis family preservation caseworkers, "I don't want to lose my kids," and he asked them to help him turn his life around. That's when he heard about the Fatherhood Initiative.

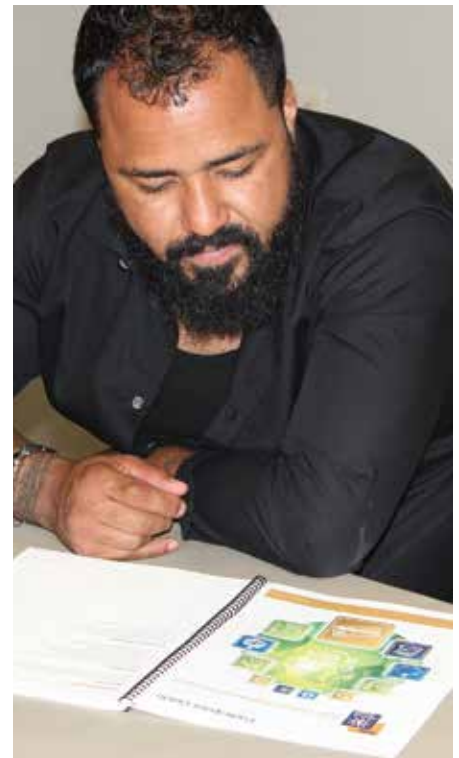
Funded by a two-year grant from the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Saint Francis Community Services' Fatherhood Initiative teaches men the skills they need to become

strong fathers and build positive relationships with their children. Typically, they're referred, but any father can participate.

"It's a community-based grant, so classes are open to the public," said Todd Hadnot, director of community outreach services. "The focus is on non-custodial fathers so they become more involved in their children's lives and learn how to meet their financial responsibilities."

Comprised of four components, the Fatherhood Initiative includes *24/7 Dad*, *Understanding Dad*, *Why Knot?*, and *Love Notes*. *24/7 Dad* offers skill-building for fathers, while *Understanding Dad* teaches moms skills to improve communication with their children's father. According to Community Service Specialist Kristin Swanson, *Understanding Dad* helps mothers see and understand how their "gatekeeping" behaviors can prevent or reduce access to their children. Limiting a father's access to his children weakens their relationship and is detrimental to the child. Both *24/7 Dad* and *Understanding Dad* started this first year of the grant. *Why Knot?*, marriage readiness for men 18-35, and *Love Notes*, pregnancy prevention for men 16-24, will begin the second year.

Hadnot and other Saint Francis facilitators teach the classes at sites throughout Kansas. They've also partnered with Kansas WorkforceONE to teach fathers financial literacy and to help



Marcus Hill studies his financial management text during a Fatherhood Initiative class in Hutchinson, Kansas.

them find the jobs and training they need to support their children. Covering 62 counties, WorkforceONE provides job search and placement, career counseling, training, and other support services. The agency has employment specialists who assist adults, those who have been laid off, and young adults finding barriers to employment. They also assist those with felonies or other court-related issues. Fatherhood career coaches like Matt Crowe serve as mentors to clients, providing referrals to services, advice, and the occasional pep talk. He also teaches financial

literacy to 24/7 Dad classes throughout the western half of the state.

"Employment is such a key component of a person's success," said Crowe. "Men need to feel they can support their family, make child support payments, pay for insurance. It's important in a man's relationship with his family. We don't want to just find them a job, we want to help them find a career. When we work with someone who's dedicated, we can help him get his spark back and realize that he's not defined by his past. We can give him hope."

Sam Klaus is one of those dedicated men. Two years clean, he recently obtained his GED. He's also studying heating and air conditioning at North Central Kansas Technical College. WorkforceONE enrolled him into their training program and assisted with support services so he could leave his job at a Hays restaurant and focus full-time on school. He also has his kids back.

"These programs can literally change people's lives if they have the dedication," said Crowe. "Sadly, a lot of people don't know about the opportunities available to them. Others are too overwhelmed by the system or they don't want to know because they're just not ready to change."

"I'm very passionate about my job, fatherhood, and helping other people find their own passion. I tell guys like Sam all the time that it doesn't matter what your friends think, get out there and make memories. Be the father your children deserve. Be silly with them. If your friends have a problem with that, maybe you should reevaluate who you're



With help from the Fatherhood Initiative, Sam Klaus is rebuilding his relationship with his kids.

hanging out with. It's the time you spend with your kids that matters. Be the father that teaches them."

That's the kind of father Sam now vows to be. He has been clean and sober since that day in August. All of his children have returned home from foster care, and he has begun rebuilding relationships damaged by years of neglect and drug abuse.

"I'm amazed when I think back to last year and what I've been able to do since then," said Sam.

"I never thought I'd be able to go back to school. Everybody I know says I've changed a lot, and they're proud of me for doing it. So are my kids."

"I have a lot of friends that I don't talk with anymore. They're at the point of losing their own kids and having their parental rights taken away because they chose drugs over their children. They made a choice, and so did I. That's not what I want for my life, I love my kids too much."

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS TEAM HELPS EMPLOYEES COPE WITH STRESS

The Rev. Elizabeth Montes believes most Saint Francis employees need a time out – at least once a week. Heavy caseloads, unpredictable schedules, and the often frenetic pace of social work create stress that can inhibit emotional and spiritual well-being. That's why the Saint Francis chaplain has put together a S.W.A.T. team to help employees carve out quiet time each week for spiritual reflection.

Comprised of "Mother Eli" and five other Saint Francis staff (Sarah Robinson, senior advisor for community relations; Debra Broadus, compliance tech; Deneice Flemming, after-care worker; Deanna Knapp, senior grant advisor; and Sylvia Brown, reintegration social worker), the Spiritual Wellness Anointed Team (S.W.A.T.) has developed a set of activities in which employees can take part to enhance their emotional and spiritual health and to alleviate stress. Participation is voluntary and supported by Saint Francis.

Wichita State University's Banda Hispanica serenaded staff with salsa music during the Wichita office's "Cinco de Meow" kick-off celebration last spring. Employees were treated to a lunch and entertainment and encouraged to sign up for activities offered to help them decompress during a stressful day.

"We wanted the event to be fun, so the employees could laugh," said Mo. Eli. "We hoped to help them forget their worries for a



The Spiritual Wellness Art Journaling groups created more than 100 affirmation cards for girls at Clover House, Saint Francis' residential program for adolescent human trafficking survivors.

while and relax, which is part of spiritual wellness."

Spiritual activities available to employees include mindful walking, meditation, art journaling, and Eucharist. The response has been positive, even if participation is sporadic.

"Because of the nature of the job, it's difficult for employees to commit to being there every time," said Mo. Eli. "Some days, they have to go to court or visit a family. Some days, we have a dozen people in art journaling. Other days, there are just two. It doesn't matter. They know we're there for them and they can come whenever they have time and the need."

Mo. Eli said her team plans to hold another event like "Cinco de Meow" in the late fall and introduce some new activities. She would also like to see the program expand to other offices.

"That would be nice," she said. "It doesn't take much planning, and it's worth it. It's great watching the transformation in people. At first, they feel kind of guilty, like they should be doing something more 'productive.' Gradually, though, they begin to see the value of allowing more time for themselves to reflect and rest in God."

SAINT FRANCIS EXPANDS SERVICES

WITH NEW OFFICE IN ABILENE, TEXAS

Saint Francis has added another state to its service area, with the opening of an office in Abilene, Texas. According to Martin Helget, director of new business development, the State of Texas is exploring innovative ways to address its child welfare system, including community-based care, which gives nonprofit agencies more expanded roles.

"Saint Francis chose to locate our first office in Abilene because, along with Wichita Falls, it's one of the



major population centers in the state," said Helget. "We wanted to start our program where there is significant need. Both Abilene and Wichita Falls have a high disparity between children needing placements and placements available."

The new office is currently staffed by Program Director Tiajuana Williams and Resource Recruiter Meredith Adams.

"Right now, I'm helping recruit foster families and ensuring that our policies and procedures match up with the state's policies," said

Williams. "I also do most of the training for new families. Meredith Adams' primary responsibility is recruitment."

Helget said there are plans for Saint Francis to eventually expand into Wichita Falls and other regions within the state. Saint Francis provides child welfare services in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and now, Texas. Another Saint Francis program, Bridgeway, provides independent living and supported employment services to adults with cognitive disabilities in Picayune, Mississippi.

RENOWNED VISITORS

Saint Francis hosted two special guests this summer who visited at the invitation of the Mission Engagement team. Thandeka Tutu-Gxashe, HIV-AIDS activist and chief executive officer of the Tutu Desk Campaign (tutudesk.org), visited offices in Salina and Wichita to learn more about Saint Francis' work, particularly in the areas of human trafficking and poverty. The daughter of Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "Thandi" shared with staff the story of Tutu Desks, which has already delivered more than 1.5 million portable desks to African schoolchildren and plans to deliver 20 million by 2025.

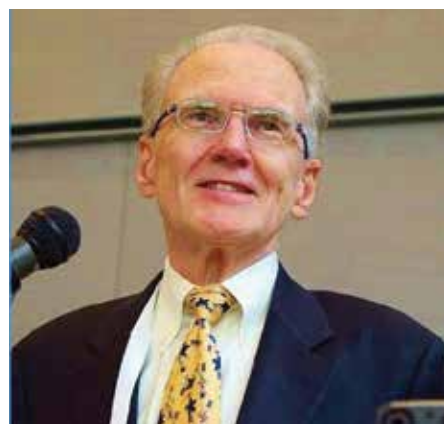
The founding director of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (nonviolent-conflict.org), Jack DuVall, also spent time at Saint Francis' Kansas offices this summer. Co-author of the book, "A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent



Chief Financial Officer Susan Henry shares a laugh with Thandi Tutu-Gxashe during Thandi's tour of Saint Francis' Salina offices.

Conflict," DuVall gave a public presentation in Salina, followed by a presentation for employees the next day in Wichita.

"From time to time, we invite people whose lives and work share commonality with the mission and vision of Saint Francis to come and visit us, share stories, and help us



Author and nonviolent action advocate Jack DuVall addressed employees in the Wichita office during his visit to Saint Francis.

grow," said Corporate Director of Mission Engagement Angela Smith. "Through others we hope to discover new ideas and models and draw lessons from different perspectives. Then we can hopefully apply them to our own context of care for children and families in new and creative ways."



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